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844 (853) generally those who have had several births themselves. Most women in a village want to go and watch a delivery; but it is said to be a sin for any woman watching to leave before the delivery is completed. This is recalled in the saying, "Delivery is like having escaped death," which means that the pain borne by a woman is nearly as much as at death. In the same way, one should never pass a woman in advanced pregnancy, in case she is in labour and (843) needs help. If too many come to the delivery one old woman selects who should stay to help and asks the rest to leave. Those who remain give encouragement to the expectant mother by saying, "Be brave, there won't be any pain." Badagas expect the woman not to cry out; but she will if the pain is too much. "The man who has seen a tiger hunt is scared like a woman just before delivery," runs the proverb, probably in reference to a woman's first delivery.

Usually some eight or ten women attend at a birth, although no more than one of them is likely to be recognized as the midwife. Though it is not compulsory for them to be present they nevertheless come, mainly out of genuine concern for the girl's predicament but also partly because they expect their friends to render similar service when necessary for themselves or their daughters. It is clear 844 that enmity among Badaga families does not particularly concern 518 the women, because even if a family is not on speaking terms with that of the pregnant girl, a woman from the "enemy" family will still attend at the birth; or if that is not possible will come to her father's house afterwards to enquire after her—as indeed would a male of this "enemy" household. Such an "enemy" neighbour woman will not eat food provided by the girl's father while she attends at the birth, but she may well accept food provided by the girl's husband and take it home to eat. The thinking behind (858) this pattern of behaviour is that the girl—at least when she was an unmarried child living in her father's house—was common to the whole village. Badaga children are always viewed in this light, rather than as exclusively members of particular families.

844 Male relatives of the woman wait outside on the veranda or the street, and if there are difficulties they will offer advice or fetch other women to help. Generally the husband of the woman is (846) amongst these men. There is nothing in particular that he should be doing; and Badagas have never practised the *couvade*. It is her husband who must meet all expenses associated with the birth, even though it occurs in the home of the woman's father. Clarified

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846 807 783 nine or 15 days she might begin to work in the house again (Jagor 1876: 199). Earlier yet, for her first birth, a woman would stay in the pollution hut until the next waning of the moon. In later confinements she would remain in the hut for only three days (Birch 1838: 104). The mother of twins, even if poor, should however 845 854 stay at home looking after them for at least three months, without doing any outside work.

"A girl who has delivered is a good sight; a field with good 846 539 crops is a good sight," according to one proverb. Within a month of the birth, on an auspicious day, mother and child return to her 777 husband's house. The party must number (including both of them) at least five persons, and must be of an odd number unless it ex- 801 ceeds 21.

846 788 On arrival there, the infant is placed near the feet of an old man standing by a lamp within the milk-house. Placing his right hand over the head of the infant, the old man blesses it, and a feast is held, before the commencement of which two cups, one containing milk, and the other cooked rice, are produced. All the relations take up a little of the rice and milk, and touch the tongue of the baby with them. (Thurston 1909:109)

843 585 851 If a woman becomes pregnant for the twentieth time by the same husband (a previous marriage does not count), then, whether all the offspring are living or not, the couple go right through the wedding and seventh-month-of-pregnancy ceremonies again. These are performed on a lavish scale, even if the husband has to borrow substantially.

The Form and Sex of the Child

858 539 4.14. A proverb asks, "If a mother gives birth to a male child, will the father object to it?" Obviously he will not, since it is a blessing to the family (Verghese 1963: 420). The same idea is also expressed thus: "By delivering a son she is like a prima donna standing on a vantage point and calling out;" or "The man who has begotten a son and the man who has planted a coconut [tree] will not spoil." Another saying puts it quite succinctly: "A strong boy, a weak girl;" and yet another emphasizes that girl babies are not much wanted: "Even though you repeatedly tell her, she is

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only giving birth to girls." Another states: "If a girl is begotten she is useless; if a boy is begotten he is an asset." Yet another proverb puts it thus: "Girls are a disappointment, but the eldest son is like a hearth." Daughters are accordingly cared for less well than sons during infancy, particularly if the couple already have several daughters. Nonethelesss there is no evidence of the female infanticide that used to be practised by Todas.

> The Badagas will welcome the birth of a son or a daughter with equal gladness. The most probable reason for this is that while Hindus see an increasing burden and expense with the hbirt of a daughter, the Badagas see a future livelihood because the daughter as well as the son helps in the fields. (Rhiem 1900: 503)

Even if they are a blessing, "One who has given birth is seven times as ill-fated as one who is without children:" they can be very troublesome!

If a child is deformed since before the birth, that is God's will and nothing can be done about it; but if any damage was done to the baby during the delivery, that can perhaps be rectified. Immediately after the delivery the midwife checks that all the limbs are in order, and at this time can squeeze the head to make it rounder if it seems very long, or can pinch up the nose if it looks flattened.

If a child is born deformed but living, it is believed that either its parents or its patrilineal ancestors committed some great sin; whereas if the deformed child is born dead no such sin was involved. Many Badagas are born with eleven fingers or toes; but this minor matter is considered to be neither lucky nor inauspicious. Badly deformed children of either sex are still encouraged to live and are not done away with; this is even more true of twins, who bring more respect to the parents than a single birth would. However, children blind or deformed from birth are extremely rare, and giants are unknown among the Badagas; dwarfs occasionally are found. One man, about a metre high, was briefly married and divorced, was a highly respected man who took an active part in the village council, and died in his sixties. He was nicknamed "Gro[illegible]ling" but was respected because his conduct was excellent and he came from a good family. He had several brothers of normal stature but was respected more than they were.

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342 roof of it is well planked, and over it is another small room called *Mêlâdu*—upper storey—which serves as a store-house. Next to the *Edirmanê*, on the right, is the *Hâgôtu*—the milk house—a place of worship to the Badagas, into which the women are not allowed to enter; and adjoining it is the kitchen, called *Hole* by the Badagas; the last of all the rooms is the *Pillê*—bath-room. Thus the front room, a store-room over it, the milk-house, a kitchen and a bath-room complete the arrangement of a Badaga house.

352 The Badaga invests some money in that most necessary piece of furniture in a cold climate,—a family cot to sleep upon. It is always a broad thick plank of some fine wood—teak, jack or ebony, and is the only substantial movable property of a Badaga.

121 We shall now describe the Badaga ceremonies and rites, and the best way to exhaust them is to trace an individual from the time of his birth to his death. Of course some difference must exist in the case of males and females, and these we shall note as we proceed.

852 In the case of a boy little or almost nothing is done to the child
(551) as a ceremony till his ninth year. On the third month after his birth he is given a name, and his head is shaved. But nothing further occurs till the baby has grown into a boy of nine years. Then

881 the initiation of the boy into the duties of a Badaga—milking the buffaloes—is performed. In describing the Badaga house I have already made mention of the *Hâgôtu*—the milk house—a place of

(547) worship in which the milk is stored up. Females are debarred
(858) from entrance into it, and so are the male children till they undergo this ceremony which we are about to describe.

Early in the morning of the day appointed for this ceremony the boy is bathed and appears in his holiday dress. A she-buffalo with her calf stands before his house waiting to be milked. The parents or other elder relations of the boy and those who have been invited to be present on the occasion, or whose duty it is to be present, then conduct the boy to the spot. The father or some one of the agnatic kindred gives into the hands of the boy a bamboo vessel called *Hope* which is already very nearly full of fresh-drawn milk. The boy receives the vessel with both his hands and is conducted to the buffalo. The elder relations show him the process, and the boy sitting down milks a small quantity into the *Hope*. This is his first initiation into the duty of milking; and it is that he may not commit mistakes on the very first day of his milking that the *Hope*

(547) is previously filled almost to the brim. It is extremely curious to see that this is observed as a regular ceremony, and it indicates